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ABSTRACT

The American Association of Teachers of French has proposed professional standards of competence for French teachers based on three principles: (1) teacher development is a continuum beginning in graduate study and extending throughout the professional career; (2) accreditation and evaluation of teacher education programs should take into account what is needed for teacher development; and (3) the foreign language should be used to the greatest extent possible in the teacher education program and in inservice education. Two levels of competence are distinguished: basic and superior. For each of five general areas, guidelines are provided concerning the role of that area in language teaching, the meaning of competence in that area, and the components of competence at both levels. The areas are culture, language proficiency, linguistics, literature, and methodology. Two additional chapters present guidelines relating to a variety of professional concerns (including class size and composition, workload, professional development opportunities, and student placement) and implications of the proposed standards for teacher education curricula in each of the five areas. (MSE)

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American Association of Teachers of French

NATIONAL BULLETIN

Volume 13, SPECIAL ISSUE October 1987

THE TEACHING OF FRENCH

A SYLLABUS OF COMPETENCE

THE PRELIMINARY REPORT OF THE COMMISSION ON PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS, THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF TEACHERS OF FRENCH

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FOREWORD

Even before teacher certification and learning assessment became major topics on the nation's educational agenda, the AATF was developing its own plans for the eventual elaboration of this report. The professional standards put forward here thus emerge from many and repeated discussions both within the committee itself and at national and regional meetings of the AATF and other language organizations. The interest and cooperation shown by members of the profession are indications of the need felt in many quarters for such guidelines.

Much of what this report prescribes for teachers of French could be proposed for teachers of other languages and, in varying degrees, of other academic subjects. At the most fundamental level, foreign language education cannot be expected to improve at a faster rate than education in general. Still, we have felt that our organization would be most effective in stating what it knows about the teaching of French, specifically, on the basis of expertise found within its own membership.

This report attempts for the first time to define not only what the level of language proficiency of a teacher of French should be, but also what should be the range of her or his knowledge in the areas of linguistics, culture, literature, and methodology. It also addresses the conditions in which such skills and learning are expected to operate.

Effective language instruction requires well trained, well equipped and well compensated teachers. It is a fact that while foreign language enrollments are growing in every educational sector in the United States, the resources allocated have often not kept pace. Although we realize the budgetary constraints placed upon all types of schools, we have articulated standards which we consider essential and minimal for a quality program. Although they may be difficult to achieve in some situations, neither teachers of foreign languages nor school administrators should consider themselves satisfied with less.

This document is thus addressed not just to members of our own association and profession, but to parents, legislators, and all those who share in the responsibility for our educational institutions. As the educational and political structures of the country begin to attach renewed value to the teaching of foreign languages, new support for the realization of these criteria can be elicited.

Philip Stewart
President, AATF
October 1987

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INTRODUCTION

The environment, for educators in general and for foreign language educators in particular, changes faster than their ability to assimilate new knowledge. Teachers and administrators fall further and further behind in their attempt to keep abreast of insights, skills, and information from related fields. We seem to have abandoned all hope to define the new "discipline" alluded to by Nelson Brooks in 1965. In addition, there has been little effort to reach a consensus among practitioners on the relative importance of various components in a foreign language teacher education program. The goal of this report is to attempt to increase awareness of the knowledge and skills needed by teachers of French.

The report is addressed primarily to decision-makers — to school and college administrators involved in teacher education, as well as to accrediting agencies. However, it is also important reading for the practitioner, who will find in it a comprehensive discussion of competencies and a preliminary bibliography for each competency.

A recent National Endowment for the Humanities publication on the state of the humanities reports that "college and university programs for preparing teachers usually give them too little time to study the subjects they will teach. These programs are also one factor discouraging bright people from entering the profession" (Cheney 23). The increasing shortage of qualified language teachers is alarming. It is this concern that prompted the decision of the AATF to create a Commission on Professional Standards, for it is imperative that AATF as a professional organization assist administrators in staffing French classes of the 1990s with qualified personnel. With the projected new shortage of teachers, there must not be a repetition of the unfortunate practice of the 1960s in which language classes were staffed with "warm bodies" who had been briefly exposed to a few French courses. When situations dictate unavoidable misassignments, this document can and should be used as a basis for remedial in-service education.

The work of the Commission evolved through three stages. First, the AATF held open meetings at national conferences: the 1985 ACTFL Conference in New York, the 1986 AATF Congress in Montreal, and the 1986 ACTFL Conference in Dallas. These open sessions reflected intense interest in the issues and generated a host of ideas which were subsequently analyzed by Commission members. Second, the Commission formed six working subcommittees chaired by national leaders in the respective disciplines that were identified as components in a statement on standards: Culture, Language Proficiency, Linguistics, Literature, Methodology, and Professional Concerns. Finally, drafts of document sections were reviewed by the Commission and sent to numerous volunteer readers prior to publication.

The best way to appreciate the work of the Commission is to consider the array of concerns expressed in the initial open sessions. These concerns ranged from a host of contractual issues such as class size and work load, to the Master Teacher concept. There was keen awareness of a point made by the Carnegie Report that school boards are influenced by the public. Conversely, inaction by professional organizations creates a situation in which personnel decisions are made by those unfamiliar with language teaching practices. The profession can no longer afford to allow others to shape public opinion.

Although the Commission takes no official stand at this time with respect to national licensing by professional organizations like AATF, this document provides a framework of competencies for the day when national professional licensing becomes a reality. It should be noted that the National Science Foundation has already initiated licensing to equalize professional standards for science teachers and that the AATF and ACTFL will study the matter in a joint session at the 1987 ACTFL Conference.

The Commission has identified three basic principles underlying this study. These principles, summarized as follows, should be seen as permeating all aspects of teacher education:

1. Teacher development is a continuum: it begins in the undergraduate program and continues during graduate study and in-service education throughout an entire professional career.
2. Accreditation of teacher education should go beyond mere program descriptions: program evaluations (and self-evaluations) should take into account what is needed for teacher development.
3. The foreign language should be used to the greatest extent possible in the teacher education program and in in-service experiences.

For practical purposes, two competency levels may be discerned. First, the **Basic level of competence** is necessary for teachers to function well in a lower-level classroom and to survive in the foreign culture. The teacher with a **Basic level of competence** operates at survival levels of knowledge and skill. S/he is comfortable teaching at the elementary level and may even have some familiarity with advanced knowledge and skills. Most beginning teachers are at this level of competence; although some teachers may remain at this level, most increase their skills and knowledge through experience and additional study. Second, the teacher at the **Superior level of competence** possesses greater breadth and depth of knowledge and skill, is more experienced, teaches advanced classes, receives consistent high marks on student and peer evaluations, and is prepared for curriculum development and participation in the training and supervision of the teachers at the **Basic level of competence.**

Realization of such a high level of expertise will depend on a concerted effort from teacher education institutions, professional organizations, school administrations, and the Federal government. For example, a critical need beyond the resources of any single agency is that of making available study-abroad opportunities.

Each competence presents special problems. In the area of culture, the reality of a Francophone world and its increased presence in French instructional materials cause one to ask what part of that world the teacher should know about and in what depth. Also, what is the role of history and the arts in the cultural domain and, again, how is such knowledge best acquired? The thorniest problem is that of relating culture to language proficiency. Flux and instability in the proficiency movement itself make any examination of the relationship between language and culture extremely problematic. This was the most delicate part of the commission's deliberations and probably the best example of compromise and consensus. Dr. Nostrand's distinguished subcommittee produced principles which are, in

fact, applicable to all the competency areas. First, in distinguishing levels, they noted that "how much of the optimal adult competence should be required for certification depends not on the age-level taught, but on the level of instruction: to teach a more advanced course, within a single age level, requires a higher degree of subject-matter competence" (Nostrand 2). Second, they identified future actions for the Commission and for the AATF and they outlined a three-stage project: (1) revision, including coordination with the criteria for the language skills by members of the subcommittee and other critics, (2) experimental use, with feed-back, and (3) validation of a later draft by a team of researchers, each specializing in one threshold or other component of the problem (Nostrand 4).

Language proficiency refers to functional ability in speaking, listening, reading, and writing French. This Commission looks forward to proficiency testing in all four skills as a prerequisite to teaching. It advocates proficiency retesting every five years and the use of test data for setting and revising standards. We see the teacher at the **Basic level of competence** as possessing, minimally, an ACTFL "advanced" rating in speaking and writing and "superior" in listening and reading. An overriding principle is the ability of the classroom teacher to function in the roles of model for and facilitator of spoken French.

Linguistics involves minimal essential knowledge about the language. As noted herein, the teacher at the **Basic level of competence** is primarily familiar with articulatory phonetics, phonemics, sound-symbol correspondences, and basic word orders. S/he also knows how linguistics relates to instructional materials and has a general familiarity with distinctions like contrastive analysis versus error analysis. The teacher at the **Superior level of competence** possesses more nuanced knowledge like the theory of distribution, levels of style, and regional variations of standard French.

For teachers having a **basic competence level** (and students, for that matter), literature reinforces language skills. It has a natural affinity with culture, linguistics, and proficiency; it contributes a humanistic dimension to language learning. A current problem is that teacher education programs are so overloaded that literature has to be compressed into survey courses. Further, much literature has, in the past, been taught without reference to the future needs of teacher education students. One essential principle endorsed by the Commission is that any literature program should familiarize students with works useful in a high school teaching career. This does not preclude more sophisticated studies of literature for the teacher with superior skills. Also, literature and methodology classes should both include discussion and experience in the selection of literary materials for language classes. A complete set of principles is outlined in the literature section of this document.

Methodology, as always, plays a critical role in the total education of teachers of French. In its treatment of error correction, it overlaps linguistics. It provides requisite professional information in a field exploding with knowledge. Its keyword is "variety" as it addresses the "how to" of culture, linguistics, and language proficiency. The teacher with basic skills needs to develop familiarity with the implementation of the four basic skills, and culture, along with lesson-planning, classroom management, and other similar practical matters. The teacher who possesses the **Superior level of competence**, after at least one advanced methodology course and some in-service education, has greater knowledge and skill in managerial functions. Such a person leads the way in the development and incorporation of new ideas and in curriculum decision-making and implementation. A clear sign of a teacher with a **Superior level of competence** is participation in local, regional, and national professional activities.

Competencies require a favorable environment if they are to be fruitfully exercised in an interactive classroom. To this end, the Professional Concerns subcommittee has identified conditions which affect drastically the ability of a teacher to function effectively. The section contains a number of positions concerning both school and college learning environments. It is hoped that administrators and accrediting agencies will reflect on and attend to the implementation of these practices. As with other theoretical assumptions in this document, they provide ready-made hypotheses for empirical testing. Ultimately, research data will provide the underpinning for all professional standards.

Joseph A. Murphy

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CHAPTER I
CULTURE

1. The Place of Culture in Language Teaching

The social and cultural context is essential for communicative competence, for understanding a language as a system of meanings, and for enjoying the literature that is the autobiography of a people.

Furthermore, the curiosity of students in our time to know about different ways of life offers the principal means of interesting them in a language and literature. From the standpoint of American education as a whole, a foreign language and culture hold the main chance of strengthening several weak dimensions. One of these is the skillful use of language, based on knowledge of how to analyze and shape verbal expression. Another is the capacity for mutually beneficial social and economic relations with the world that lies outside the English-speaking countries. A third is self-understanding, which requires a perspective from a point outside our culture, for it involves awareness of how one's culture influences the way one thinks and feels. While it is not proposed that proficiency in one's own culture be evaluated as part of the competence defined here, foreign-language teaching certainly should make its whole unique contribution to human development, and this includes the liberating perspective on one's culture from outside.

2. Meaning of Cultural Competence

A consensus on the essentials of this competence has developed over the past forty years among the educators who have given it the most thought. Acceptance will have to be field-wide, however, before adequate national tests can be constructed.

The consensus is based on the concept of a culture as an organic whole made up of values, a grid through which one sees the world, habits of thought and feeling, and habits of interacting with certain social institutions and customs. The present evolution of a culture is strongly influenced by its past, including its proud achievements.

Within a culture area, different national societies lead to different sociocultural systems, yet they share important central patterns of culture. This is true of the more than forty countries or regions where French is the first or second language *(Dictionnaire général de la francophonie)*.

Cultural competence can best be defined as a combination of three interrelated parts: the sociolinguistic skill of communication, certain areas of knowledge, and certain enlightened attitudes. The three parts will be described at two levels of competency, **Basic** and **Superior**, at the end of these introductory considerations.

Cultural competence has the same meaning for a teacher as for anyone else. It is quite separate from pedagogical competence, the techniques for imparting one's skills, understanding and enlightenment to others. And while those techniques vary greatly from pre-school to graduate school teaching, the cultural competence of the teacher remains the same. At each age level, even early childhood, one can impart some elements of an adult understanding, as Jerome Bruner has shown; and the quality of a teacher's or a parent's understanding inevitably reflects itself in the quality of a young learner's development.

Fortunately, an adult understanding of a culture requires only a certain core of the vast existing knowledge about the French culture area. It is the specialist in a field of research, international negotiation, or the like, who must add to the core in one direction or another.

Cultural competence does however include a body of knowledge and attitudes that supplements the understanding of a single culture area and its component societies.

To be more than an amateur observer, one needs to know how to relate the heterogeneous surface manifestations to underlying core elements (Nostrand 1977). Also one needs a kit of conceptual tools:

—field study, direct and remote — pen and tape pals, sister cities; the complementary roles of inside and outside observers;
—the differentiation of subcultures — regional, socioeconomic, age groups (Stoetzel);
—the analysis of space and time concepts — the monochronic and polychronic ways of "living" time; and the distinction between high-context and low-context cultures (Hall);
—contrastive analysis — notably the identification of key cross-cultural variables (Hofstede) and the analysis of the contact points between cultures (Carroll).

To avoid overgeneralizing about "national traits," one must distinguish three levels of useful generalization: about humanity as a whole; about a single culture or subculture; and about individual differences.

Enlightened attitudes are like the conceptual tools in that once acquired in studying any culture, they apply to all (Seelye, chapter 11). The following, ranging from rudimentary to sophisticated, are all desirable for the **Basic** cultural competence, and are indispensable at the **Superior** level:

—curiosity about discovering similarities and differences between one's home culture and French culture;
—intellectual awareness that "different" does not mean "wrong"; and applied to language, that the Canadian pronunciation, for example, is not "inferior" to the Parisian;
—without losing one's own identity, a basic desire to accommodate to the norms of the foreign society;
—the determination to avoid overgeneralization and stereotyping;
—an appreciation of the fact that each culture makes sense in its own terms, and that no one culture is privileged to possess an absolute criterion for judging the others;
—awareness of the fact that one's perceptions and judgments are patterned by one's home culture, and are subject to temporary influences such as the phases of culture shock (Valdes 35);
—a critical approach to statistics and opinion polls: a concern to know the date and scope of the evidence, even if one is not able to judge the credibility of the agency;
—a fair-minded, relativistic appreciation of cultural differences to the point of being able to present objectively some judgments that foreigners make concerning one's home country.

3. Consensus and Diversity

Consensus on a core competence, sufficient for the purposes of education and evaluation, is compatible with wide diversity in local and individual variation beyond the core.

Diversity is imposed first of all by the fact that the two components of understanding, "experience of" and "knowledge about," develop differently at the different age levels. In childhood the former, the sociolinguistic performance, advances ahead of "knowledge about." At later age levels, any knowledge or attitude can be taught to beginners, and has educational value long before it may be needed for performance abroad. Adult learners, moreover, have specific personal or vocational objectives on which their motivation depends, and they differ in attitudes and appreciations. A critical appreciation and an enthusiastic one, reasonably defended, can be equally valid forms of cultural awareness.

4. The Evaluation of Cultural Competence

The definition of a competence entails provision for evaluating it (Valette; Crawford-Lange and Lange 169-170).

Sociolinguistic performance is inextricable from communicative competence. The ACTFL interview test of the speaking skill inevitably includes cultural elements. The same interview can therefore yield a separate assessment for the sociolinguistic skills based on a sampling of critical elements such as the use of *tu/vous*, the formal and informal ways of speaking and behaving, and the nonverbal factors that make for ease and rapport with an interlocutor.

Unlike the behavior involved in oral communication, knowledge and attitudes can be evaluated in writing. The dominant attitudes of a person can be brought out, despite the virtuous self-image so often induced in such testing, by a combination of instruments, notably the Osgood semantic differential; opinion questions on a 5- or 7-point scale; and the critical-incident question. A test combining these approaches is exemplified in the *Manuel du professeur* accompanying *Savoir vivre en français*, by Howard and Frances Nostrand and Claudette Imberton-Hunt.

ACTFL has planned research to develop a national instrument for evaluating cultural competence, and the National Teacher Examination already includes some culture items.

The following descriptions of the **Basic** and **Superior competence** are presented in the form of examples, which come closer than do generalized statements to the operational definition of standards needed for evaluation, teaching, and curriculum design.

5. Basic Cultural Competence

Basic cultural **competence** is an outgrowth of the thresholds up to and including "Advanced" on the ACTFL scale, and rating "2" on the Government's Interagency Language Roundtable (ILR) scale. It is called "Minimal Social Competence."

5.1. Sociolinguistic Ability (Heny; Crawford-Lange and Lange)

A person at this level of cultural competence

—can meet all the demands for survival as a traveller: can reach an intended destination via public transportation; secure lodging for the night; order and pay for food and drink; cash a check; make a simple purchase; conduct a simple phone conversation and take notes on information such as price, location, and departure time;

—in addition to the survival-level skills, can recognize the meaning of crucial signs and symbols, understand most announcements made over public address systems, gather the gist of a newscast if free to listen intently, and after specific preparation, can grasp the main points of a lecture and take notes;

—can handle any common social situation with an interlocutor accustomed to foreigners: make polite requests, offer and receive gifts and invitations, apologize, make introductions, and discuss some current events or policies, a field of personal interest, a leisure-time activity of one French-speaking country; can participate in a conversation if conducted in "français soigné," perhaps asking to have some expressions repeated or paraphrased; manage to convey an attitude of good will via tone of voice and nonverbal means.

5.2. Knowledge (Michaud; Ardagh; Duby; Seelye; Knox)

A person at this level of competence

—can interpret simple menus, timetables, schedules, maps; manipulate the currency; knows which kinds of shops sell what kinds of merchandise, and knows where to go for information on such subjects;

—beyond the survival level, knows about the phases of "culture shock" and how they may affect perception (Valdes 35); can identify the truth or untruth implied in the stereotypes of his or her home culture and of French culture;

—can list a few common attitudes regarding public behavior and appearance and can produce a few proverbs or sayings which reflect a world view one encounters in one French-speaking country or region;

—can name several present political parties in France, and two or three major contemporary issues;

—can describe in broad outline the main geographical regions, the political institutions, the public-education system, and the mass media of one French-speaking country;

—can describe or give examples of qualities prominently sought in French education, such as clear expression and organization of ideas, knowledge of French history and geography, and prevalent assumptions such as the contrast between friends and outsiders or between work and leisure; the inseparable relation of a fact to its context; and a few aspects of space and time concepts which bear on social and business relations (Hall);

—can discuss the present significance of the historic periods, prominent personalities and cultural achievements in France since the Middle Ages, and in the French-speaking world since the 18th century; can define such twentieth-century expressions as the Resistance, collaboration, the Algerian war, and May '68 as they relate to present attitudes;

—can identify, in a literary or a journalistic text, examples of elevated style and of familiar and popular expressions, and in reading, can point out some of the verbal indications of attitudes, hidden quotations or allusions; can read classified ads containing the customary abbreviations.

6. Superior Cultural Competence

Superior cultural **competence** is an outgrowth of the "Superior" threshold on the ACTFL scale, and rating "3" on the ILR scale of 5. It is called "Working Social and Vocational Competence."

At the **Superior level** the person has additional skills and knowledge which enable a teacher to give a fuller experience of the culture, as well as to build upon individual motivation by relating to a wider variety of student interests.

6.1. Sociolinguistic Ability

At this level of cultural competence, a person

—uses cultural references and idioms, comprehends puns, and consistently distinguishes between a formal and an informal way of speaking and behaving; interacts with the rhythm of the interlocutor (Hall 1983) and keeps the French distance between persons — "proxemics" (Hall 1959); as an example of formal/informal behavior between speakers — if called upon to simulate meeting an old friend after a lapse of time, can judge whether an *embrassade* or handshake is appropriate, depending on the situation, social milieu and ages of the persons;

—finds comic some culture-related French humor, e.g., a passage from Pierre Daninos, and can tell what a French person finds amusing in a situation involving culture-related humor: for example, an unwarranted pretense to *intellectualité*, a self-satisfaction that clashes with the value of *la simplicité*, or an incongruous cultural allusion; in a joking or teasing situation, can explain the danger of offending;

—can participate in a formal meeting, or an informal discussion where several persons talk at the same time; and can infer the underlying intent of a speaker from what is said;

These are three abilities important as goals and as criteria for defining this level, though they are not testable in the one-on-one interview.

6.2. Knowledge

At this level of competence, a person

—can discuss abstractions in fields of prior study: a vocation, a hobby, an aspect of one French-speaking area, for example, its main institutions, social stratification and mobility, the place of private organizations and unions, informal customs, sex- and age-group differences, current cultural and social changes;

—with respect to France and one additional French-speaking area, knows the point of view of a few current political figures and periodicals, knows about the electoral procedure, and can discuss some recent cultural achievements in film, song, art, architecture, or literature including TV and cartoon serials;

—can list ten of the more than forty francophone countries or areas;

—can explain features of his or her culture that puzzle a French-speaking inquirer.

Many non-native teachers of French aim at the two levels still higher on the ILR scale. In the case of cultural competence, these categories cannot be conceived as "Near-Native" and "Native," but simply as "Near-Optimal" and "Optimal," for the outsider never will match the native's childhood experience, nor the unconscious use of face muscles. On the other hand, the outsider, while conforming to the customs of the society, has a capacity for an eclectic approach to French values and habits of mind which is hard for the native to imitate. These levels, moreover, require a broader knowledge of the French culture area as a whole than most natives ever attempt.

7. The Projected Sequel to These Definitions

In time it should be possible to choose and arrange empirically the main behavioral and cognitive elements of cultural competence: what is really needed for survival in a society and for successive levels of social and vocational adequacy seems bound to become determinable in the light of examined experience. Until such experience exits, however, the choice and sequencing of elements can only be hypothesized as the best approximation achievable in the present state of the art.

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CHAPTER II
LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY

1. The Meaning of Proficiency

Proficiency is the level of competence at which an individual functions linguistically in a specific community. It is imperative that foreign language teachers function well, in a culturally-appropriate fashion, in four linguistic skill areas: speaking, listening, reading, and writing. The ability to use French effectively for both oral and written purposes may well differ from knowledge about French grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation. Teachers need not only to know about French language, literature, and culture; they need to be able to use this knowledge to communicate effectively.

The ability to speak, understand, read, and write French well encourages teachers to use French in class, providing expansive and accurate models for their students. A sound command of French gives teachers the linguistic freedom necessary to personalize lessons according to their students' backgrounds and interests, thereby facilitating effective lesson planning and helping them work efficiently so as to meet the many demands on their professional time. It also allows them to maintain contact with French-speaking cultures, giving them current information to share with their students. Not only will teachers who are comfortable in French be better prepared for work in the classroom, they will also find it easier to take students to French-speaking communities, and while there, they will serve as models of the many advantages of having a strong command of French language and cultures.

To ensure that teachers have the necessary ability in French, they should be required to demonstrate linguistic proficiency by passing a test in each of the four skill areas before beginning their teaching career. At present, speaking is the only skill for which a suitable, widely-accepted test is available: the Oral Proficiency Interview of the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages. Based on an interview used for over 30 years in the U.S. Government language schools, the ACTFL interview is a face-to-face conversation between the person being tested and one tester, covering a range of topics and functions and lasting approximately 20 minutes (Liskin-Gasparro).

It is hoped that appropriate national proficiency tests will soon be available in the other three skill areas as well. Until this time, descriptions of proficiency in writing, reading, and listening can be based upon the ACTFL *Guidelines* (ACTFL 1986). (For current test development efforts by ACTFL, see Dandonoli and Kaya-Carton and Carton; for discussion of testing listening and reading, see *Foreign Language Annals*, special issue, September 1984; for discussion of testing writing, see Magnan 1985).

Using the ACTFL Proficiency Interview and other tests as they become available, teacher-training institutions and school districts are encouraged to consider proficiency testing for their own individual purposes. When developing a testing program, it is important to recognize that proficiency in a foreign language may decrease, as well as increase, over a period of years. Therefore it would seem advisable for teachers to verify their language skills periodically by retaking the proficiency examinations approximately every five years. School districts should contribute substantially to funding for retesting. It must be further recognized that in order to reach and maintain strong linguistic proficiency, teachers will most likely need to spend time in a French-speaking country both during their professional preparation and periodically after they begin teaching.

Regular proficiency testing will provide valuable data on both linguistic competence and linguistic maintenance, useful in establishing standards on the state and national levels. It will also contribute to research on the appropriateness of the test procedures themselves and contribute to their continued refinement. To this end, we need careful records of proficiency test scores, test sheets, and examination tapes that we can make available, anonymously and with permission, to research groups developing proficiency tests and studying the proficiency level of French teachers nationwide.

2. Levels of Language Competence

This commission recognizes two levels of language competence, **Basic** and **Superior** as distinguished in the other areas of competency — culture, linguistics, literature, and methodology. The recognition of two levels of competence enables this commission to take into consideration the difficulty of developing outstanding linguistic proficiency in a regular bachelor's degree teacher-training program (Carroll; Reschke; Magnan 1986), while responding to the desire of ensuring a core of linguistically-strong French teachers.

Using the ACTFL *Guidelines*, the **Basic competence** is suggested at the ACTFL proficiency level of Advanced for the two productive skills, speaking and writing, and at the ACTFL proficiency level of Advanced Plus for the two receptive skills, listening and reading. This distinction between productive and receptive skills is appropriate as teachers especially need considerable competence in the receptive skills, and as receptive skills generally develop more rapidly than productive skills. The **Superior competence,** recommended by this commission, is suggested at the ACTFL proficiency level of Superior in all four skills.

With quotations from the proficiency statement of the 1986 ACTFL *Guidelines*, the recommendations for **Basic** and **Superior competences** follow.

3. Basic Competence

Basic competence is needed for teachers to function well in a lower-level classroom, to arrange student trips abroad where they will guide students through tourist activities with minimal social interaction with native French speakers, and to be able to maintain limited contact with French-speaking cultures through written and oral media.

Speaking: ACTFL Advanced Level

The 1986 ACTFL *Guidelines* describe the Advanced level in speaking as follows:

> The Advanced level is characterized by the speaker's ability to:
>
> —converse in a clearly participatory fashion;
>
> —initiate, sustain and bring to closure a wide variety of communicative tasks, including those that require an increased ability to convey meaning with diverse language strategies due to a complication or an unforeseen turn of events;
>
> —satisfy the requirements of school and work situations; and
>
> —narrate and describe with paragraph-length connected discourse.

The Advanced speaker is therefore . . .

able to satisfy the requirement of everyday situations and routine school and work requirements. Can handle with confidence but not with facility complicated tasks and social situations, such as elaborating, complaining, and apologizing. Can narrate and describe with some details, linking sentences together smoothly. Can communicate facts and talk casually about topics of current public and personal interest, using general vocabulary. Shortcomings can often be smoothed over by communicative strategies, such as pause fillers, stalling devices, and different rates of speech. Circumlocution which arises from vocabulary or syntactic limitations very often is quite successful, though some groping for words may still be evident. The Advanced-level speaker can be understood without difficulty by native interlocutors.

Writing: ACTFL Advanced Level

The ACTFL *Guidelines* describe the Advanced level writer as someone who is . . .

able to write routine social correspondence and join sentences in simple discourse of at least several paragraphs in length on familiar topics. Can write simple social correspondence, take notes, write cohesive summaries and resumes, as well as narratives and descriptions of a factual nature. Has sufficient writing vocabulary to express self simply with some circumlocution. May still make errors in punctuation, spelling, or the formation of nonalphabetic symbols. Good control of the morphology and the most frequently used syntactic structures, e.g., common word order patterns, coordination, subordination, but makes frequent errors in producing complex sentences. Uses a limited number of cohesive devices, such as pronouns, accurately. Writing may resemble literal translations from the native language, but a sense of organization (rhetorical structure) is emerging. Writing is understandable to natives not used to the writing of nonnatives.

Listening: ACTFL Advanced Plus Level

The ACTFL *Guidelines* describe the person with Advanced Plus listening comprehension as someone who is . . .

able to understand the main ideas of most speech in a standard dialect; however, the listener may not be able to sustain comprehension in extended discourse which is propositionally and linguistically complex. Listener shows an emerging awareness of culturally implied meanings beyond the surface meanings of the text but may fail to grasp sociocultural nuances of the message.

Reading: ACTFL Advanced Plus Level

The ACTFL *Guidelines* describe the person with Advanced Plus reading skills as someone who is . . .

able to follow essential points of written discourse at the Superior level in areas of special interest of knowledge. Able to understand parts of texts which are conceptually abstract and linguistically complex, and/or texts which treat unfamiliar topics and situations, as well as some texts which involve aspects of target-language culture. Able to comprehend the facts to make appropriate inferences. An emerging awareness of the aesthetic properties of language and of its literary styles permits comprehension of a wider variety of texts, including literary. Misunderstandings may occur.

4. Superior Competence

Superior competence is needed for teachers to function well in upper-level classrooms, to arrange student trips abroad, guiding students through tourist activities, and interacting socially and professionally with native French speakers, and to maintain long-term professional and social contact with French-speaking peoples through written and oral media. The teacher with **Superior competence** can use French to advantage in both social and professional situations and is at ease in responding to individual student needs in French both in the classroom and in a French-speaking community.

Speaking: ACTFL Superior Level

The Superior level is characterized by the speaker's ability to:

—participate effectively in most formal and informal conversations on practical, social, professional, and abstract topics; and

—support opinions and hypothesize using native-like discourse strategies.

The Superior speaker is therefore . . .

able to speak the language with sufficient accuracy to participate effectively in most formal and informal conversations on practical, social, professional, and abstract topics. Can discuss special fields of competence and interest with ease. Can support opinions and hypothesize, but may not be able to tailor language to audience or discuss in depth highly abstract or unfamiliar topics. Usually the Superior level speaker is only partially familiar with regional or other dialectal variants. The Superior level speaker commands a wide variety of interactive strategies and shows good awareness of discourse strategies. The latter involves the ability to distinguish main ideas from supporting information through syntactic, lexical and suprasegmental features (pitch, stress, intonation). Sporadic errors may occur, particularly in low-frequency structures and some complex high-frequency structures more common to formal writing, but no patterns of error are evident. Errors do not disturb the native speaker or interfere with communication.

Writing: ACTFL Superior Level

The ACTFL *Guidelines* describe a person with Superior writing ability as someone who is . . .

able to express self effectively in most formal and informal writing on practical, social and professional topics. Can write most types of correspondence, such as memos as well as social and business letters, and short research papers and statements of position in areas of special interest or in special fields. Good control of a full range of structures, spelling or nonalphabetic symbol production, and a wide general vocabulary allow the writer to hypothesize and present arguments or points of view accurately and effectively. An underlying organization, such as chronological ordering, logical ordering, cause and effect, comparison, and thematic development is strongly evident, although not thoroughly executed and/or not totally reflecting target language patterns. Although sensitive to differences in formal and informal style, still may not tailor writing precisely to a variety of purposes and/or readers. Errors in writing rarely disturb natives or cause miscommunication.

Listening: ACTFL Superior Level

The ACTFL *Guidelines* describe a person with Superior listening comprehension ability as someone who is . . .

> able to understand the main ideas of all speech in a standard dialect, including technical discussion in a field of specialization. Can follow the essentials of extended discourse which is propositionally and linguistically complex, as in academic/professional settings, in lectures, speeches, and reports. Listener shows some appreciation of aesthetic norms of target language, of idioms, colloquialisms, and register shifting. Able to make inferences within the cultural framework of the target language. Understanding is aided by an awareness of the underlying organizational structure of the oral text and includes sensitivity for its social and cultural references and its affective overtones. Rarely misunderstands but may not understand excessively rapid, highly colloquial speech or speech that has strong cultural references.

Reading: ACTFL Superior Level

The ACTFL *Guidelines* describe a person with Superior reading ability as someone who is . . .

> able to read with almost complete comprehension and at normal speed expository prose on unfamiliar subjects and a variety of literary texts. Reading ability is not dependent on subject matter knowledge, although the reader is not expected to comprehend thoroughly texts which are highly dependent on knowledge of the target culture. Reads easily for pleasure. Superior-level texts feature hypotheses, argumentation and supported opinions and include grammatical patterns and vocabulary ordinarily encountered in academic/professional reading. At this level, due to the control of general vocabulary and structure, the reader is almost always able to match meanings derived from extralinguistic knowledge with meanings derived from knowledge of the language, allowing for smooth and efficient reading of diverse texts. Occasional misunderstandings may still occur; for example, the reader may experience some difficulty with unusually complex structures and low-frequency idioms. At the Superior level the reader can match strategies, top-down or bottom-up, which are most appropriate to the text. (Top-down strategies rely on real-world knowledge and prediction based on genre and organizational scheme of the text. Bottom-up strategies rely on actual linguistic knowledge.) Material at this level will include a variety of literary texts, editorials, correspondence, general reports and technical material in professional fields. Rereading is rarely necessary, and misreading is rare.

5. Conclusion

In order to provide high-quality foreign language experiences for students, teachers need solid professional preparation. This preparation must include, among many essential components, the development of functional linguistic skills that will enable teachers to use the French language effectively and with ease both in the classroom and in French-speaking societies. Regular proficiency testing in all skill areas will allow us to recognize and substantiate the valuable and necessary linguistic skills of French teachers and thus help ensure the continued linguistic competence of our students.

Degree-granting teacher certification programs and school districts are encouraged to study the feasibility of beginning to test proficiency in speaking through the ACTFL Oral Proficiency Interview and to contribute to the development of suitable proficiency tests in writing, listening, and reading. Such institutions should immediately identify key personnel to receive the necessary background and training in proficiency testing procedures in order to direct their institutions in developing testing programs and to maintain contact with professional organizations involved in competency issues.

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CHAPTER III
LINGUISTICS

Linguistics is the scientific study of language. Analyzing French helps to define the patterns, similarities, and repetitions of the language. The more systematic the language becomes, the easier it is to teach and learn. It is not sufficient to know the language; good teachers must know *about* the language. They must be able to explain, to the extent it is possible, why a language works as it does. A knowledge of French linguistics helps teachers prepare more accurate presentations, answer student questions more precisely, and evaluate pedagogical materials more effectively.

Linguists have applied their research skills to many aspects of language use. The study of how people learn a foreign language has produced many theories of how learning takes place and how teachers can best help the learner. Teachers who are aware of these theories and who can take them into account during the teaching process are able to find teaching techniques that correspond to their students' learning styles.

Teachers interested in reading more extensively on the various topics that follow may refer to the items listed in parentheses in the following sections. These items may be found in the chapter of suggested bibliography at the end of the Report.

1. Basic Competence Level

Teachers of French should know the following aspects of French:

Articulatory phonetics: distinctive features of consonants and vowels, rhythm and intonation patterns, and rules for liaison and elision so that they can accurately describe to their students how the sounds are produced, evaluate student production, and make suggestions for improvement. (Carduner and Hagiwara; Delattre; Léon; MacCarthy; Valdman 1976; Valdman et al.)

Phonology: the differences between phonemics and phonetics errors so that they can teach a comprehensible pronunciation to their students without spending an excessive amount of time on one skill.

Sound-symbol correspondences (the spelling system of French): in order to teach students to pronounce words when they see them and spell words they hear. (Gak)

Lexicology: rules for gender of nouns by semantic category and word endings to simplify the learning of a phenomenon that does not exist in English. (Tucker et al.)

Lexicography: what the basic dictionaries are and how to use them in order to teach students to increase their knowledge of the language independently. Dictionaries to know are monolingual (*Dictionnaire Hachette, Lexis*, Robert), bilingual (Mansion, *Collins-Robert*), and for specific difficulties (Colin).

Syntax: basic order of words in the sentence to promote accurate speech and writing. (Grevisse and Goosse 1980 and 1986; Mauger)

Sociolinguistics: major levels of style, such as the differences between casual conversation and oratory, to prepare students to communicate with native speakers in realistic situations and help them avoid negative reactions from natives. (Bonin; Pimsleur)

At the **Basic Level,** teachers should be familiar with the following fields of research in applied linguistics to the extent that they understand the concepts and can apply basic conclusions:

Contrastive analysis: the primary differences between French and English and the problems likely to occur so that they can anticipate and explain recurring errors. (Politzer; Robinett and Schachter)

Error analysis: interlingual vs. intralingual and other sources of learners' errors in order to understand the stages that learners must go through in acquiring a foreign language (Richards; Schumann and Stenson) and native speaker reactions to various classes of errors in order to establish hierarchies of importance for correcting students' errors (Eisenstein; Ensz; Ludwig; Magnan; Piazza).

The informal acquisition-formal learning distinction and its pedagogical applications in order to take into account differences between foreign language learning in a classroom and in the native culture and to plan lessons to increase student learning. (Ellis; Krashen; Rivers)

Cognitive style in order to develop teaching strategies to help different types of learners. (Birckbichler; Brown)

Discourse analysis in order to better understand and teach how people communicate. (Kramsch; Larsen-Freeman)

The relationships among theories of linguistic analysis, the psychology of learning, and teaching methodologies in order to understand how teaching methodologies develop and to recognize and to analyze more carefully pedagogical materials. (Diller; Hammerly; Richards; Roulet)

2. Superior Competence Level

In addition to all the features of French listed above, teachers of French at the **Superior Level** should know the following:

Phonology: variations in the sound system of standardized French in order to recognize the choices that native speakers have at their disposal and to avoid teaching and correcting distinctions that are not important. (Martinet and Walter; Valdman 1976)

The theory of distribution as applied to mid vowels, nasal vowels, and stop consonants so that they can teach a more coherent, and therefore easier, system. (Valdman 1976)

How the distribution of vowels affects verbs and adjectives; classification of verbs and adjectives by oral as well as written forms so that oral production will be more accurate and that students will see the highly structured system of word formation. (Grundstrom; Valdman 1976)

Sociolinguistics: levels of style and the salient features of *le français familier* to prepare students to communicate with native speakers in realistic situations and help them avoid negative reactions from natives. (Bonin; Caradec; Guiraud; Pimsleur)

Some important aspects of at least one regional variation of standardized French, such as *le français du Midi* or *le québécois* and some phonological and semantic features that characterize it in order to encourage an appreciation for French-speaking cultures and varieties of language and to prepare students to communicate with native speakers of French from around the world. (Carton et al.; Chiclet and Dupré La Tour; Mignault; Valdman 1979; Walker)

The teacher should have a knowledge of greater depth of all the fields of research in applied linguistics listed above under **basic level competence.** The teacher should know the details of the research that has been done as well as the theories that support each field of endeavor.

A knowledge of all aspects of linguistics as applied to the teaching of French takes many years to acquire. The efforts to do so will be well rewarded in more effective teaching and higher student proficiency.

CHAPTER IV
LITERATURE

Il n'est pas possible d'avoir une bonne connaissance de la France sans une bonne connaissance de sa littérature . . . Le texte littéraire, à cause de son niveau d'élaboration linguistique et esthétique, est souvent le meilleur document culturel qui existe (Carduner).

1. The Place of Literature in Language Teaching

Along with the obvious importance of linguistic competence, cultural awareness, and knowledge of methodology, the teacher of French must have a solid foundation in the literature of France and the Francophone world. Literature is the one form of language which does not depend upon location; one can read a French novel, listen to a French folk singer, watch a French movie anywhere in the world. Good literature is appealing, informative, and thought-provoking in a timeless context. Through literature a student can learn not only linguistic patterns typical of an epoch but also cultural referents of that time. Moreover, the skills developed in literary appreciation can be applied to any work regardless of language.

The current emphasis on teaching for oral proficiency leaves little time for a solid foundation in literature, not only for the secondary student but for the university major as well. At the secondary level literature is frequently not introduced until the most advanced stages which the greatest percentage of students never attain. Undergraduate French majors often find their program so full that there is room for only a survey course in literature. Textbooks filled with *documents authentiques* and realia from many different media leave no room for excerpts from *Le bourgeois Gentilhomme*, the poems of Prévert, or the words of a song of Jacques Brel. How is the student to truly understand the French people if he has no knowledge of the literature which they themselves value so highly?

2. The Preparation of the Teacher at the Basic Level of Competence

If literature is to be an important component of the French curriculum at the secondary level, it must be no less so for the teacher-in-training. The teacher of French at the **Basic level** of competence should have studied at least four representative works from each century (middle ages through 20th century) to include important examples of all the genres. Works of the 17th century such as the *Fables* of La Fontaine or the plays of Molière represent not only classicism but also universal values such as *l'équilibre* or *le juste milieu*. Nineteenth-century works can be read as examples of specific movements but are equally valid as representative of social problems still evident in the modern world. With a broad basis in literature, even the teacher with a **Basic level** of competence can enrich a beginning class by using reading selections which reinforce linguistic objectives through humanistic material. At the very least, such knowledge makes manifest the intimate relationship between culture and literature.

Reading selections need not be limited to prose. Poetry defies translation and forces the reader to make the language of the poem a part of himself, thereby internalizing language as a basis for appropriate spontaneous use at any time. It also provides the pleasant repetition that "tends to stick in our minds"(Billows 237). According to F. L. Billows, "the central problem of language teaching is that of passing representative significant sentences often enough through the mind, when it is in a favorably receptive condition"(237). Poetry is sometimes expressed in song and even in film. These contemporary media offer excellent potential for classroom instruction. Thus, the teacher at the **Basic level** and who is sensitive to literature, might create a stimulating cultural, literary, or even phonetic lesson in the presentation of simple poems by Verlaine or Prévert. Sometimes poems are set to music, as in the case of Verlaine's "Je suis venu calme orphelin," sung by Georges Moustaki. Multi-media experiences such as this facilitate the learning of French by "passing representative significant sentences often enough through the mind, when it is in a favorably receptive condition."

3. The Preparation of the Teacher at the Superior Level of Competence

At the level of **Superior** competence, the teacher should expand her/his knowledge of French literature to include several works from each literary period and writers from French-speaking areas such as Africa, Canada, and the Caribbean. S/he should have studied in depth important authors and literary movements. The teacher at the **Superior level** of competence needs to be knowledgeable about the techniques of *explication de texte* and stylistic analysis not only to broaden his or her own understanding of literature but also to be able to better develop this understanding in students. At this level, students can use literary materials for expressing sophisticated critical thinking skills by engaging in what Robert Probst has termed the "three relations in the teaching of literature": (1) reader and text (explication, critique); (2) reader and reader (discussion); and (3) text and text (comparison of a given theme in two or more texts) (60-67). Hence the teacher at the **Superior level** of competence needs a breadth and depth of literary experiences in order to plan an environment in which linguistic, cultural, and cognitive (critical thinking) goals can be achieved indirectly via encounters with literary texts.

4. Methodology

Coupled with a solid foundation in the various aspects of French literature, the future teacher needs to have specific training in teaching the literary work. It has often been said that teachers teach as they have been taught. If during their training, future teachers experience only lecture courses, they will find themselves severely limited in developing alternate approaches which will appeal to the secondary student. Therefore, the future teacher needs to experience, personally, techniques such as the response-reaction process in which the reader becomes intimately involved in the interpretation process. The teacher needs to be aware of the techniques of teaching students how to read, but s/he should not confuse this skill with the more complicated skills which move the student from reading a text to understanding it and being able to interpret it in light of stated goals (Kramsch). S/he also needs to know how to select appropriate literary texts for various levels and abilities (Birckbichler and Muyskens). S/he needs training in how to test a student's comprehension of a literary work as well as his or her understanding of that work as it relates to life and the world (Verble). Finally, the teacher of French must have sufficient command of the language to be able to communicate ideas to students without resorting to English or allowing them to do so.

It is not only possible to teach literature qua literature

but also to improve language skills through literature (Chimombo). However, this entails a pre-service curriculum in which future teachers experience at least some of the following activities: drama workshops, personalized responses to literature, connotation-awareness exercises, the preparation of language exercises based on literary materials, schema-development exercises, *explication de texte*, and creative writing. It is probably not realistic to assume that these can be accomplished in any single course. They are, rather, high-level cognitive processes which need to be built into the fabric of all literature and methods classes.

5. The Advanced Placement Program

As the Advanced Placement program develops, more and more secondary schools are including the AP French Language and French Literature courses in their curriculum. It is hoped that these courses would be taught by the teacher possessing the **Superior level** of competence, who has had a strong foundation in the works to be read and in the techniques required for critical analysis. The Advanced Placement course is meant to be the equivalent of a third-year college level course; in literature it is the equivalent of the general survey course taken by majors in French as the first step in the literary strand of the curriculum. Thus, secondary students are expected to perform at the same level as a third-year college student, given the same material. The national exam taken by all students seeking AP credit requires high linguistic and analytic skills. Therefore teachers who are assigned AP courses must possess not only outstanding competencies in French but must also have an extensive knowledge of French literature and the specific skills required for textual analysis. The required reading list and the supplementary materials are comprehensive and thorough, requiring far more preparation than the teacher possessing the **Basic level** of competence could be expected to have. A teacher at the **Superior level** of competence with some experience in teaching literature might still need extra preparation in order to teach this program.

5.1. Superior Literary Skills

In order to attain a **Superior level** of competence, teachers of literature need the historical, cultural, and literary background for the works to be studied. Important areas of background knowledge include Biblical, mythological, and historical allusions. In addition, they should be able to use a variety of critical approaches. They need to be aware of different levels of meaning within a literary work. For example, a critical reader should distinguish: (1) actions and acting forces, (2) psychological dimensions, (3) sociological dimensions, (4) structural dimensions, (5) stylistic dimensions. The **Superior level** teacher should be able to engage students in a collaborative discussion of the various meanings of a text.

Superior level teachers should be able to differentiate between story (*l'histoire*) and discourse (*le discours*), between connotation and denotation, between form and substance. The sensitive teacher/reader will be able to make these distinctions and to incorporate them in creative writing and teaching *(Teacher's Guide to Advanced Placement Courses in French Literature).*

Often universities offer special summer institutes for just this purpose, and workshops are run on an annual basis for both the novice and the teacher experienced in teaching AP who feel the need to develop techniques. Teachers of Advanced Placement courses should be given every possible opportunity to engage in these summer or in-service courses in order to continually improve their skills and knowledge of the program.

6. Recommendations

The preceding recommendations suggest that courses be available both in content and in methodology which will specifically prepare teachers to be able to deal effectively with literature in the secondary school program. Attempting to include such skills in survey courses is doing disservice to the future teacher as well as to her/his students. A strong foundation in French literature will strengthen the teacher, the students, and the study of French.

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CHAPTER V
METHODOLOGY

In recent years, with increased research conducted into the nature of language acquisition and applied linguistics, there has been a proliferation of newer teaching techniques and methodologies as well as increased sophistication of technology. These have concentrated on developing the ability to communicate via the spoken word. While the knowledge of grammar remains important as a guiding structure for language acquisition, students are asked to develop their listening and speaking skills with early attempts at creative use of language. The teacher's judgment of how and when to correct errors of grammar and pronunciation has become an important concern of contemporary methodology. The present focus on language teaching is proficiency — initially in the spoken form and subsequently in the written language.

With the profession's current focus on teaching for proficiency, the teacher of French has to be fluent and knowledgeable about Francophone culture. The availability in this country of French media such as newspapers, films and tapes and their pedagogical and motivational value require fluency to a degree not often presented by a novice teacher. A three year period of professional and linguistic development following receipt of the initial certificate should permit the desired fluency.

The teacher of the 1990s must know the elements of variety and pacing and how to use a wide variety of techniques, material and technology with which to make classroom instruction interesting, meaningful and practical. Recent advances in the areas of language acquisition, applied linguistics and technology demand a series of instructional competencies which can be used for students of varying interests, abilities and necessities.

There is too vast a body of knowledge to be contained in a general secondary methods course for prospective teachers of *all* disciplines. Not only do we recommend a foreign language methods course, but we go so far as to suggest two such courses separated by a period of time during which a new teacher can put into practice the ideas and techniques learned in the first. The pre-service course would provide the prospective teacher with an historical background on language teaching, some theoretical concerns and a variety of techniques with which to enter the profession and develop a routine. An advanced course given after a two or three year interval would introduce the practicing teacher to a wide range of contemporary methods while offering decision-making opportunities based on abilities and interests of language learners.

Within these courses and through other professional experiences, the following competencies should be acquired at these levels in order to qualify for the permanent certificate. For more extensive reading on the various topics that follow, the items listed in parentheses in the following sections may be found in the chapter on suggested bibliography at the end of the Report.

1. Basic Level of Competence

The teacher who possesses the **Basic level of competence** will

1. be familiar with the currents of pedagogical development in the 19th and 20th centuries as well as the desired outcomes of each method. (Hammerly; Omaggio; Rivers)
2. know how to teach major skill areas — listening comprehension, speaking, reading and writing.
   a) know how to teach standard French pronunciation; know how to prepare exercises and drills to help learners acquire standard French pronunciation and diction. (Allen and Valette; Omaggio; Rivers; Valdman)
   b) know how to differentiate between important and non-important errors as well as how and when to make corrections. Some are the result of natural linguistic development and may be temporarily overlooked while others, which impede communication, should be pointed out for correction. (Krashen and Terrell; Omaggio; Walz)
   c) know how to teach the writing skill in such a way as to reinforce the spoken word, to introduce sound-symbol correspondence and proper spelling and to develop guided composition. (Dvorak; Gaudiani; Magnan)
3. know how to manage classroom dynamics and run instructional sessions for small groups and individuals.
4. know how to use specific techniques for introducing elements of culture into the classroom. In this context, culture refers to knowledge of the daily life as well as important historical and geographical factors of the French and of various Francophone groups throughout the world. These techniques include the following:
   a) culture capsules (Knop; Morain; Seelye)
   b) culture cluster (Meade and Morain)
   c) culture assimilators (Knop; Morain; Seelye)
   d) cultural mini-dramas (Knop; Morain; Seelye)
5. know how to prepare instruments with which to diagnose and evaluate the skill areas of speaking, listening, reading, and writing as well as a knowledge of culture. (Rivers; Omaggio; Krashen and Terrell; Stevenson; Valette; Winitz).
6. know how to prepare and use audio/visual aids such as the chalkboard, the audio-cassette recorders, the slide, overhead and film projectors. (Krashen and Terrell; Omaggio; Rivers)
7. know how to select literature and poetry at the secondary level. (Bird; Steiner)
8. be familiar with the content and format of textbooks used at various levels of instruction. (Guntermann and Phillips; Omaggio; Rivers)

2. Superior level of competence

The teacher who possesses a **Superior level of competence** will

1. know how to use ideas and suggestions taken from the new methodologies (Suggestopedia, Total Physical Response, Natural Approach) to teach the basic skills of listening comprehension, speaking, reading and writing. The preparation of classroom activities should be in accordance with the latest theories of teaching and language acquisition. (Asher; Guntermann and Phillips; Krashen and Terrell; Lafayette and Strasheim; Omaggio; Winitz)
   a) know how to teach speaking as a creative form of self-expression. (Omaggio; Rivers; Krashen and Terrell)
   b) know how to use techniques with which to develop students' listening comprehension. (Krashen and Terrell; Omaggio; Rivers)
   c) know how to use various strategies to teach intensive and extensive reading comprehension with a series of progressively more complex texts. (Byrnes; Omaggio; Rivers)
   d) know how to teach writing as a developmental process, progressing from the written word as reinforce-

ment and transcription through various stages to creative composition. (Dvorak; Gaudiani; Magnan)

2. be aware of ideas and techniques of anthropologists and sociologists for imparting cultural information. (Hammerly; Seelye)
3. be familiar with cultural referents of the French language and how vocabulary and idiomatic expressions relate to elements of Francophone culture. (Trescases)
4. know how to use all forms of the media in teaching French with special attention focused on television, VCR and the computer. (McCoy and Weible)
5. know how to select materials of interest from Francophone cultures from broadcast and print media and documents and prepare them for class use. (Berwald; Krashen and Terrell)
6. know how to teach literature at the secondary level. This includes presenting background information about authors and preparing appropriate exercises and study sheets. (Bird; Steiner)
7. know how to prepare lessons that incorporate a variety of oral and written activities for individual, small group and entire classes. (Allen and Valette; Omaggio; Rivers)
8. be familiar with the content and format of textbooks and computer software used at various levels of instruction as well as the evaluative criteria necessary to judge their potential. (professional journals and conferences)
9. be familiar with new developments and materials in the area of French teaching and with sources of new materials, techniques and research. (professional journals and conferences)
10. know how to incorporate new ideas on teaching into the curriculum and how to adapt texts and other teaching materials to desired outcomes of skill development. (Berwald; Guntermann and Phillips; Omaggio; Krashen and Terrell; also professional journals and conferences)
11. know how to interpret various aptitude and proficiency tests available to the profession and be familiar with the guidelines of the oral proficiency test developed by ACTFL and ETS. (Omaggio; Valette)

CHAPTER VI
PROFESSIONAL CONCERNS

While the formation of teachers is the joint responsibility of the individual and of the educational institutions which provide instruction and experience in teaching, the school districts and institutions of higher learning which hire the teachers also have the responsibility of providing the best environment possible in which teachers can teach and students can learn. This section of the Commission's Report suggests guidelines for the establishment of working conditions that educational institutions should provide for the teacher of French.

Conditions vary greatly from one school district to another and from one university to another. What is accepted in one may not be possible or even desirable in another. However, there are certain minimum criteria that should obtain in even limited programs if the efforts of the well-trained teacher are to meet with success; even the most proficient teacher will experience mediocre results if the working conditions are not favorable.

The Commission recommends criteria in the following areas:

1. The Teaching Day

1.1. Class Size

Class size has a direct impact on the quality and quantity of student learning outcomes in a language class. The Task Force on Class Size and Workload in Secondary English Instruction suggests that the following range of variables have a direct relationship with class size (these same factors are relevant to the teaching of foreign languages):

1. number of individual teacher-student contacts
2. range of opportunities for students to use language
3. number and range of student-initiated enterprises and projects
4. degree of individual involvement in class activities
5. range, across time, of activities and approaches used in class meetings
6. students' use of exploratory talk and expressive writing
7. helpfulness and tolerance in teacher-student conferences
8. number of homework assignments collected and checked or marked
9. number of writing assignments collected and commented on
10. nature of teacher's response (oral and written) to written work
11. requests for and checks on students' revisions of written work
12. frequency of drill work and exercises
13. teacher's use of workbooks and textbooks
14. types of tests teacher uses (e.g., quantitative measures versus qualitative measures; written test versus informal observation)
15. use of devices to monitor progress
16. use of lecture and lecture/recitation
17. use of groups and group activities
18. number and types of questions teacher asks (Smith)

Because of the importance of these factors, the absolute maximum in any foreign language class at any level, beginning, intermediate or advanced, in elementary or secondary school or at postsecondary institutions should not exceed twenty-three. Schools which are committed to having their students acquire oral proficiency should limit class size to eighteen students. In conversation and discussion courses, the preferred maximum is nine students. In general, "class size must be small enough to enable—rather than to inhibit—the kind of effective interaction between teacher and students necessary to developing proficiency in the language" (ADFL).

1.2. Class Composition

In order for good learning and good teaching to occur, students with different levels of experience should not be grouped together. Combined classes—French III and French IV, for example—should not exist. Educational institutions must commit funds and resources to support advanced courses, even if they contain fewer than the usual minimum number of students.

1.3. Number of Classes or Hours Taught per Day

Classes taught should not exceed four clock hours per day. Teachers need time to prepare for classes, to consult with students and colleagues, and to perform vital out-of-class duties.

1.4. Number of Different Preparations Taught per Day

Three preparations should be the absolute maximum. In those schools with a small staff, where additional preparations are necessary to ensure and maintain a full program, consideration should be given to finding ways to lighten the teacher's work load in non-instructional areas.

1.5. Extra Duties Unrelated to the Teaching of French

Extra duties should be related to professional responsibilities, e.g., curriculum committee work, language laboratory coordination, individual work with students, French club, French National Honor Society, etc.

2. Professional Development

2.1. Accessibility to Materials and Equipment

Educational institutions should provide access to teacher reference materials and library resources. They should also provide the textbooks, workbooks, audio-visual and computer equipment and software and supplementary materials necessary to carry out an effective foreign language program. Needed materials such as magazines, dictionaries and encyclopedias should be an integral part of the school or department budget. Each student should have her or his own workbook rather than share consumables.

2.2. Possibility for Teacher Growth and Development

School districts and colleges should provide funds and opportunities for professional staff members to attend conferences, regional meetings and workshops, to participate in interschool visits, immersion and foreign exchange programs, and for additional study, both at home and abroad. The high-level competence outlined in this Report is achieved as much through participation in professional activities as by completion of formal educational programs. Released-time and support for such experiences contribute unquestionably to a strong curriculum administered by informed up-to-date practitioners. They also accelerate the movement of the teacher from the **Basic level** to a **Superior level** of competence.

2.3. Provision for Enrichment Activities

School districts should support with time, funds, and personnel on-going access to museums, theatrical presenta-

tions, and other cultural experiences, including the use of local native speakers. The "laboratory" for a foreign language curriculum is in fact the living culture in which a language is embedded. Students and teachers alike benefit from first-hand contacts with the foreign culture. They deserve access to these community resources.

2.4. Observation and Evaluation

Members of a department should work together on a continuing basis to improve performance. They should be open to evaluation by their peers, supervisors, and students.

3. Curricular Concerns

All school districts should provide an articulated program beginning no later than grade seven and continuing through grade twelve. The emphasis should be on culturally oriented communication and should introduce literary readings as students are ready for them. The optimum program will begin in the Kindergarten or grade one and proceed sequentially through each grade of the elementary school, to be articulated with a continuing program in the junior and senior high schools.

3.1. Curriculum Planning

Schools and colleges should have clearly stated objectives for each course offered, establishing a strong sequence from the basic through the intermediate to the advanced levels, as well as providing a balance between skills courses and content courses.

Materials, methods, and syllabi should be uniform in multiple sections of the same course to assure continuity.

Elementary school courses should meet at least four days per week for at least twenty minutes in grades one to three and thirty minutes in grades four to six. Starting at the Junior High School level, classes should meet daily for a minimum of forty to forty-five minutes.

3.2. Articulation

Within school districts, elementary, junior high school and senior high school courses should be so planned as to reinforce previously learned material and to introduce new vocabulary and structures in a logical sequence. Partnerships should be set up in geographical areas between secondary schools and universities to share mutual concerns such as sharing of resources, staff development, and articulation of course material so as to avoid duplication of previously learned material.

4. Student Placement

4.1. Communication with Counselors

Counselors of students must be fully cognizant of the sequence of foreign language courses in the school district and should have a working relationship with teachers and department heads so as to determine the best placement for individual students, whether they be new to the district or continuing students. Counselors should be provided with material that shows the value of foreign language study so that they may have an informed basis on which to advise students.

4.2. Student Placement at the College Level

A screening process should be used for university courses to ensure accurate placement of students. The ACTFL proficiency guidelines might provide a common foundation for placement and articulation between secondary school and college.

5. Conclusion

In order for teachers to perform at an optimal level, they must work under favorable conditions. Educational institutions must commit the time, the funds and the resources necessary to implement the well-thought-out goals they have set for their teachers and students.

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CHAPTER VII
CURRICULAR IMPLICATIONS

The recommendations of the Subcommittees of this Commission entail a number of important implications for the curricula of all schools, from elementary through graduate school. These implications, set out in this section for the consideration of all interested parties, have potential impact not only on the various schools but also on the teachers and students in these schools.

1. CULTURE:

"The need to teach language in relation to social and cultural values affects educational choices with respect to curriculum, materials, and approaches and should be central to national planning and programs for professional development and the improvement of teaching" (Lehmann and Jones 186). Curriculum designers need therefore not only to develop inventories of materials for local use, but also to work toward a nationwide consensus on a common core of central elements.

The concepts that supplement the study of one culture should be developed cyclically, with the same care as the French materials illustrated above.

While any knowledge about a foreign culture can be imparted in the learner's home language, it is imperative that instruction be conducted in French, not only for communicative competence but also because the whole range of cultural competence does not become possible until one joins knowledge about a culture with experience of the culture in its own terms.

1.1 School and College Courses

The cultural skills, knowledge and attitudes should be integrated into the presentation of the language and literature, both of which are thus illuminated and made more interesting. Insights into the culture show precisely what is exemplified. In turn, the concrete manifestations of the organizing concepts make them come alive, and give the learner a feel for the extent to which generalizations can be trusted. (Crawford-Lange and Lange; Lange; Gaudiani)

The study of a culture need not conflict with the central place of literature in language study if, in teaching a text, one inquires into the values, the habits of mind and assumptions it conveys. No aspect of literature, in fact, could come closer to what students seriously discuss among themselves.

The three levels of useful generalization can readily be illustrated by literature, and indeed by linguistics. At the top level, humanity as a whole is distinct from other creatures in that we use symbols: signs that have multiple referents. All other creatures are limited to signals: signs with a single referent. At the level where we generalize about one culture or subculture are the very different sets of symbols — languages, and dialects. And at the bottom level are individual ideolects.

A linguistic insight can be used safely on the dangerous ground where cultural relativism confronts prejudiced attitudes. A British pronunciation of [o], the [ɛu] ridiculed by Americans as an affectation, can be shown to be a natural, further dissimilation of the already diphthonguized American [ou].

The contrastive approach, inherent in the human mind, needs to be played down until students are convinced that the foreign way of life, as well as theirs, has its own center and coherence. Otherwise the "We do this, they do that" confirms their suspicion that the foreign way departs in all directions from the one culture that makes sense to them, and therefore is patently "weird."

1.2. Teacher Education

Undergraduate and graduate courses in language and literature should demonstrate the inclusion of the social and cultural context. Besides this, the teacher needs one or more courses on history and contemporary institutions of at least a main part of the French-speaking world, (Allen; Lehmann and Jones). David Pinkney and Howard Nostrand found successful a team-taught undergraduate course on "The Making of Contemporary France," which traced the development of one theme a week to its present state: the regional populations, centralization, the revolutionary tradition, the two colonial empires and their outcome, industrialization, urbanization, education, the status of women, and so on. The lectures had to be in English for the mixed class of history and French students, but the reading and a discussion section were available in French.

Research can be fruitful at the **Basic level**, in a team project or with some guidance. An example of a topic of manageable scope is a study of the values embedded in a literary work. Many such studies are needed. At the **Superior level**, the teacher should be able to play a role as a specialist on one of the interdisciplinary teams engaged in advancing beyond the present, either in the field of describing a culture, in that of defining and evaluating cultural competence (Byrnes), or in one of the fields involving the humanities and the arts.

1.3. Self-Development

In-service courses, seminars, workshops and professional meetings are all useful as part of a plan of self-education. But one can also be more self-dependent, observing methodically and taking notes in the culture area, and reading such books and articles as are listed in the bibliography that accompanies this report. Indeed, few if any of the contributors listed ever took a course on the subject; there was none. Yet after devoting long years to such study, they can save their successors time in their quest for the competence that has slowly taken shape.

2. LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY

2.1. Teacher Training Institutions

In order for teachers to develop the recommended competence in French, even at the **Basic level of competence**, B.A. and graduate programs in French should be conducted nearly exclusively in the French language. Only in actually using French will teacher candidates gain functional ability in French, as well as learn about the language and the people who speak it. Also essential is a substantial period of study or work in a totally French-speaking environment: an academic year abroad or three immersion experiences of several months. Institutions should provide scholarships, grants, and/or immersion experiences, so that all teacher candidates can benefit from intensive language and cultural exposure at no more than the cost of schooling at their home institution.

2.2. The Schools

In order to maintain and continue to improve their proficiency in French once they have left their degree institutions to work in the field, teachers need to use French in

class daily, read regularly, listen to French recordings or broadcasts, and return periodically to a French-speaking environment. Schools need to help teachers maintain this contact with French through subscriptions to French newspapers and journals, through access to French radio, films, and literary works, and through opportunities to spend time in French immersion situations offered by summer workshops or courses and trips abroad.

Schools should also be sensitive to differences in the French proficiency of their teachers, giving more advanced classes to teachers who have attained **Superior competence** levels recommended by this Commission. Teachers at the **Basic level of competence** should be given more elementary classes and encouraged to take opportunities to improve their French proficiency, especially through summer workshops, courses, and experience abroad in French-speaking societies.

3. LINGUISTICS

Language departments in institutions that train future teachers should offer the following courses:

1. Phonetics. The course should describe the phonology of French as well as improve student pronunciation.
2. Advanced grammar and composition. Students should learn grammar as well as practice their writing skills.
3. Applied French linguistics. The course should cover phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics, and sociolinguistics.

The following courses should be offered by departments of foreign language education, curriculum and instruction, ESL, English, or foreign languages:

1. Applied linguistics for teaching foreign languages. The course would present a history of the fields of research in applied linguistics, such as contrastive analysis, error analysis, learner systems, native speaker reactions, cognitive style, and discourse analysis.
2. Second-language acquisition. The course would present various theories of how people learn a foreign language, with reference to how children learn their first language.

4. LITERATURE

The curriculum designed to prepare the teacher at the **Basic level** of competence should incorporate the following principles:

1. Texts taken from the Middle Ages to the present should include selections from all genres;
2. Reading, explanation/discussion, and writing should always be done in French;
3. Course work should include a variety of different modes of instruction in literature;
4. Texts read should include those normally used at the secondary level;
5. Any methodology course should include a formal segment on the teaching of literature.

The curriculum designed to move the teacher possessing the **Basic level** of competence to the **Superior level** of competence or to strengthen skills of teachers already at the **Superior level** of competence who are working in the field should include the following:

1. A variety of courses which treat in depth specific movements, genres, authors;
2. Reading selections from Francophone authors not normally covered in the introductory literature courses;
3. A methodology course designed for experienced teachers which contains a formal segment on teaching literature, textual analysis and *explication de texte*.
4. A course or a strong segment of a course which treats the Advanced Placement program in both Language and Literature.

The preceding recommendations are not meant to weaken the language proficiency segment of the curriculum, for while the focus of a course may be literary in nature, all reading, discussion, or writing done in French can only serve to develop both language and literature skills. This recommendation clearly implies expanded work in methodology and other content areas.

5. METHODOLOGY

1. Teacher education programs should make available to prospective teachers and to practitioners two methods courses: one for *basic* competencies and one for *superior* competencies, as outlined in this report. Neither of these classes should include students from other content areas.
2. Library facilities should include the major journals in foreign language education (*Foreign Language Annals* and *Modern Language Journal*, at a minimum), as well as those treating French language and literature (for example, the *French Review*). Moreover, these journals should be incorporated into linguistics and methods curricula.
3. The pre-service teacher education curriculum should provide opportunities for the novice to undertake simple library research in foreign language education. Graduate curricula should teach advanced research skills, including the critique and eventual design of empirical studies.
4. The undergraduate curriculum should provide learning experiences achieved, at least in part, through the use of modern media (for example, film, video, and computer-assisted instruction).
5. The undergraduate curriculum should afford at least occasional opportunities for the prospective teacher to diagnose learning problems, to tutor, to plan, and to assist in the teaching of specific lessons.
6. Attendance and participation at professional meetings should be encouraged in both undergraduate and graduate curricula. Whenever possible, students should receive credit for such activities.

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CONCLUSION

Foreign language instruction takes place in a dynamic ever-changing social context. The knowledge and competencies of one generation will not effectively serve the needs of a later one. We need only consider recent research on second-language acquisition to see that the structuralism of a few years ago can no longer provide the sole linguistic foundation for language teaching. The various sections of this Report reveal clearly and specifically such progress in related disciplines.

To what use will this knowledge be put? Much depends on the success of the next phase of the project. The AATF is making a commitment to the implementation of the study. It will do so by promulgating the Report and its recommendations to the fullest possible extent. Specifically, it will disseminate the findings among all those responsible, directly or indirectly, for foreign language teacher education. It will join with other language organizations to study the feasibility of national licensing for language teachers. It will distribute the Report to accrediting agencies, soliciting their responses and encouraging them to utilize AATF recommendations in their work. It will submit articles on new standards for publication in professional journals and the public media.

It was stated in the introduction that teacher development is a continuum which spans many years in the life of a teacher. Optimal development will occur only if the total educational needs of the teacher are somehow planned and coordinated. Presently, educational institutions operate on an ad hoc basis. Each institution assumes responsibility for certain fragments or strands in what is essentially an organic process, but none is charged with coordination and none, with quality control. The AATF is proposing a change in this state of affairs. We offer this Report as a first step in a cooperative effort to provide future language teachers fresh requisite knowledge and skill.

Joseph A. Murphy

RECOMMENDED BIBLIOGRAPHY

The recommended bibliography is presented under the same broad categories as the chapters of this Report. This list of recommended readings is not to be considered definitive. Many equally important books and articles have not been included for lack of space. The Subcommittees faced a difficult task in limiting the list to the items included. It is their hope that the suggestions included here will lead to additional reading in professional journals and books. For those who find this list too long for the time at their disposal, in a few broad categories some items have been starred (*) to indicate that the reader will perhaps profit most by reading these items first.

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AATF COMMISSION ON PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS QUESTIONNAIRE

Please respond and return this questionnaire, no later than December 31, to:

Prof. Joseph A. Murphy, Dept. of Foreign Languages
116 Chitwood Hall, West Virginia University
Morgantown, WV 26506

Introduction

1. Do you agree that AATF should write national standards for teachers of French? Yes_____ No_____
2. Do you believe that AATF should take steps toward eventual licensing of teachers of French? (Note: This presupposes national licensing as a supplement to, not a replacement for state certification. This also presupposes that AATF will become involved in the testing of competencies.) Yes_____ No_____

Culture

What changes should be made in:

1. The Basic level of competence?
2. The Superior level of competence?
3. The curricular implications?
4. The bibliography?
5. In general, do you support this section of the document?
   Yes_____ No_____
   Yes, with reservation _____ (Please explain)

Language Proficiency

What changes should be made in:

1. The Basic level of competence?
2. The Superior level of competence?
3. The curricular implications?
4. The bibliography?
5. The recommendations of the language proficiency section are based on the ACTFL Guidelines. Do you support the use of the ACTFL Oral Proficiency Interview to test teachers?
   Yes_____ No_____
6. In general, do you support this section of the document?
   Yes_____ No_____
   Yes, with reservation _____ (Please explain)

Linguistics

What changes should be made in:

1. The Basic level of competence?

2. The Superior level of competence?

3. The curricular implications?

4. The bibliography?

5. In general, do you support this section of the document?
   Yes_____ No_____
   Yes, with reservation _____ (Please explain)

Literature

What changes should be made in:

1. The Basic level of competence?

2. The Superior level of competence?

3. The curricular implications?

4. The bibliography?

5. In general, do you support this section of the document?
   Yes_____ No_____
   Yes, with reservation _____ (Please explain)

Methodology

What changes should be made in:

1. The Basic level of competence?

2. The Superior level of competence?

3. The curricular implications?

4. The bibliography?

5. In general, do you support this section of the document?
   Yes_____ No_____
   Yes, with reservation _____ (Please explain)

Professional Concerns

What changes should be made in:

1. The recommendations in this section?

   _____

   _____

2. The curricular implications?

   _____

   _____

3. The bibliography?

   _____

   _____

4. In general, do you support this section of the document?
   Yes_____ No_____
   Yes, with reservation _____ (Please explain)

   _____

   _____

The Report as a Whole

1. Does this preliminary statement of standards address all the major competency areas?
   Yes_____ No_____
   If not, what has been neglected?

   _____

   _____

2. Do you find the length of the report
   a. Appropriate_____ b. Too long_____ c. Too short_____?
   If you checked b or c, please elaborate, citing specific sections or areas of information that should be changed, and giving specific suggestions.

   _____

   _____

3. In general, do you support the Report of the Commission on Professional Standards?
   Yes_____ No_____
   Yes, with reservation (please explain)

   _____

   _____

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